

1979 RAIL TRAFFIC HITS ALL-TIME HIGH

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 4, 1980 -- Freight traffic on U.S. railroads during 1979 totaled an estimated 902 billion ton-miles, a record high, and 5.2 percent above the previous record of 858 billion ton-miles reported in 1978, the Association of American Railroads reported today.

Ton miles increased 6.8 percent in the East, 1.3 percent in the South and 5.8 percent in the West.

The largest gain was in the first quarter of 1979 when ton-miles increased 10.1 percent over the same period of 1978 which was severely depressed by adverse weather conditions and the United Mine Workers' (UMW) strike. The second quarter increase was 3.6 percent, reflecting a normalization of activities in 1978.

In the third quarter of 1979, ton-miles increased by 9.5 percent. Here again the comparison was distorted due to a lengthy strike in 1978 by the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) against the Norfolk and Western Railway which culminated in a 4-day shutdown of virtually every major railroad in the nation.

In the fourth quarter of 1979, ton-miles trailed the same quarter of 1978 by 0.7 percent, as the industry began to feel the impact of the economic downturn.

Carloadings for the year totaled 23,876,524, 2.2 percent above 1978. The greater increase in ton-miles than in carloadings stemmed from a continuation of the trend toward the retirement of smaller cars -- with the resultant increases in average load per car -- longer average hauls (particularly in western coal movements) and fluctuations in the commodity mix, with gains in shipments of freight forwarder traffic and chemicals and allied products, which produce higher than average ton-miles per car loaded.

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Coal traffic posted the largest gain of any major commodity in 1979 -- up 18.7 percent over 1978. This increase was attributable, to a great extent, to an increase of 108.8 percent in the first quarter, reflecting the UMW strike in 1978. Loadings of grain also recorded a significant gain, up 6.6 percent over 1978.

Other increases included metallic ores, up 3.2 percent; forwarder and shipper association traffic, up 3.0 percent; metals and products, up 1.8 percent; nonmetallic minerals, up 2.6 percent and chemicals and allied products, up 3.4 percent.

Motor vehicles and equipment was the biggest loser, down 11.0 percent. Crushed stone, gravel and sand and farm products other than grain also declined sharply.

Ton-miles for the holiday week ended December 29 totaled 12.0 billion, 5.0 percent below the corresponding holiday week of 1978. Carloadings were 9.5 percent lower than the previous year, and 33.4 percent below the preceding non-holiday week of 1979.

Piggyback revenue traffic for the week ended December 22 totaled 36,260 cars, down 3.2 percent from the corresponding week of 1978. Cumulative volume for the first 51 weeks of 1979 reached 1,835,091 cars, 1.2 percent above 1978.

Trailers and/or containers loaded totaled 64,228 in the December 22 week, up 0.6 percent over 1978. The cumulative total was 3,239,013, a 3.4 percent increase, and a new record.

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Following are carloadings of major railroads, by commodity groups, for 52 weeks of 1979 and 1978.¹

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>Incr. or Decr. 1979 vs. 1978</u>	
			<u>Cars</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Grain	1,428,170	1,340,254	I 87,916	6.6
Other farm products	222,713	243,543	D 20,830	8.6
Metallic ores	1,765,494	1,710,477	I 55,017	3.2
Coal	5,254,337	4,427,722	I 826,615	18.7
Crushed stone, gravel and sand	853,479	954,892	D 101,413	10.6
Nonmetallic minerals	783,067	763,137	I 19,930	2.6
Grain mill products	917,154	972,038	D 54,884	5.6
Food and kindred products	953,397	990,488	D 37,091	3.7
Primary forest products	1,054,916	1,086,117	D 31,201	2.9
Lumber and wood products except furniture	596,620	648,859	D 52,239	8.1
Pulp, paper and allied products	1,096,595	1,093,814	I 2,781	0.3
Chemicals and allied products	1,488,167	1,439,191	I 48,976	3.4
Petroleum products	335,578	358,307	D 22,729	6.3
Stone, clay and glass products	943,730	962,252	D 18,522	1.9
Coke	359,676	375,384	D 15,708	4.2
Metals and products	983,835	966,396	I 17,439	1.8
Motor vehicles and equipment	1,122,309	1,261,174	D 138,865	11.0
Waste and scrap materials	713,116	711,617	I 1,499	0.2
Forwarder and shipper association traffic	642,103	623,665	I 18,438	3.0
All other carloads	2,341,234	2,400,254	D 59,020	2.5
LCL traffic	20,834	25,896	D 5,062	19.5
Total Cars Loaded	23,876,524	23,355,477	I 521,047	2.2

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change</u>
Revenue ton-miles (in billions):				
First Quarter	207.6	188.5	I	10.1
Second Quarter	238.3	230.4	I	3.6
Third Quarter	230.5	210.5	I	9.5
Fourth Quarter	226.0 ^e	227.5	D	0.7
Year	902.4	858.1 ²	I	5.2

^e Estimated

¹ The figures include 12 railroads no longer considered Class I roads when the qualifying requirement for Class I companies was raised by the ICC from \$10 million to \$50 million in annual operating revenues as of January 1, 1978.

² Total for year is from a different source and will not reflect total of quarters.

Following are carloadings of major railroads, by commodity groups, for the week ended 12/29.

	Loadings in Week ended December 29, 1979		Change from Corresponding Week 1978			Change from Preceding Week	
			Cars	Percent		Cars	Percent
Grain	20,628	I	486	2.4	D	13,293	39.2
Other farm products	2,648	D	1,217	31.5	D	1,615	37.9
Metallic ores	25,776	D	1,547	5.7	D	3,453	11.8
Coal	73,789	D	1,535	2.0	D	37,416	33.6
Crushed stone, gravel and sand	7,879	D	2,554	24.5	D	4,298	35.3
Nonmetallic minerals	12,821	I	905	7.6	D	2,084	14.0
Grain mill products	13,432	D	1,304	8.8	D	5,140	27.7
Food and kindred products	13,088	D	1,196	8.4	D	6,679	33.8
Primary forest products	10,874	D	1,324	10.9	D	9,757	47.3
Lumber and wood products except furniture	5,641	D	2,418	30.0	D	5,910	51.2
Pulp, paper and allied products	13,436	I	345	2.6	D	9,080	40.3
Chemicals and allied products	23,581	D	686	2.8	D	5,571	19.1
Petroleum products	4,870	D	902	15.6	D	1,396	22.3
Stone, clay and glass products	11,963	D	2,322	16.3	D	4,160	25.8
Coke	5,881	D	1,646	21.9	I	286	5.1
Metals and products	12,789	D	3,680	22.3	D	3,606	22.0
Motor vehicles and equipment	6,934	D	3,441	33.2	D	9,876	58.8
Waste and scrap materials	7,581	D	1,781	19.0	D	5,763	43.2
Forwarder and shipper association traffic	7,110	D	1,219	14.6	D	4,939	41.0
All other carloads	25,293	D	4,759	15.8	D	19,567	43.6
LCL traffic	142	D	158	50.7	D	73	34.0
Total Cars Loaded	306,156	D	31,952	9.5	D	153,390	33.4
Corresponding week of 1978	338,108						

1979

1978

% Change

Estimated revenue ton-miles
(in billions):

Week ended December 29	12.0	12.6	D	5.0
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